

November 2, 2005

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Fergus County Commissioners
Marilyn & Charlie Fuselier
Vinita Shea
Charlie Brown
Harry Fradley
Dale Pfau, Central MT shooting Sports Complex

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In October you received a draft environmental assessment (EA) prepared for a Shooting Range Development Grant project planned to make improvements on the Central Montana Shooting Sports Complex located on property owned by the Central Montana Shooting Complex, Inc. near the city of Lewistown in Fergus County. The attached decision notice contains responses to public comment. Please consider the draft EA and decision notice as the final document.

Based on the EA public comment, it is my decision to proceed with providing funding through the Shooting Range Grant Development Program. For the Central Montana Shooting Sports Complex range improvement project. I find there to be no significant impacts associated with this action and conclude an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted. The complete EA and the response to comments included in the attached Decision Notice are an appropriate Level of analysis.

Thank you for your interest and involvement.

Sincerely,

Thomas Baumeister,
Education Bureau Chief

DECISION NOTICE
Project
Prepared By
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
November 2, 2005

I. Proposal

This proposed project is located on property owned by the Central Montana Shooting Complex, Inc. approximately 4 miles north of the city of Lewistown on LimeKiln road in Fergus County. The project includes fencing small and big bore areas; purchase & installation of cattle guards; water tanks & installation; hydro seeding and sterile spraying for berm areas; purchase & installation of two outdoor toilets; reseed construction areas; grading, graveling of roads and shooting areas; complete concrete work & shooting cover on big bore pad; targets; concrete tables for small bore area.

II. Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

MEPA required FWP to assess the potential consequences of this proposed action for the human and natural environment. The proposal was detailed in a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) completed by FWP August 24, 2005. The 30-day comment period for this EA ended October 27, 2005.

Issues raised during the public comment period on the EA are addressed in the Comments section of this Decision Notice. The Draft EA and Decision Notice will serve as the final document.

III. Summary of Public Comment

As of October 27, 2005, FWP had received written comments from 4 nearby landowners outlining a series of concerns. No other comments were received. The issues outlined in the letters (summarized in bold italics) and corresponding responses by FWP are presented as follows:

Issue 1. Map omits neighbors bordering on Lime Kiln: Met with landowners and found the map to be accurate.

Issue 2. Page 6 Table 1 Potential impact on physical environment- #11 Aesthetics:

The old rifle range is a public use facility. It is principally used for sighting in. Activity is very limited and random. The proposed shooting complex is private and multi-use. There is no indication that the new facility will not be an eyesore. There is already a significant rearrangement of the landscape. There is every reason to expect with further growth there will be a significant visual impact. The old range is a very limited facility and barely visible. The most significant eyesore is the trash in the area. That issue can be present at the new facility as well.

The new range complex has already begun and this EA addresses additions to that new facility. There are of course no guarantees that the new facility will not degenerate into an eyesore. However, the new facility will be operated by the Central Montana Shooting Complex, Inc. (CMSC). The operation of shooting ranges and complexes by local clubs and organizations usually results in a better maintained facility than those that are public property or that are open to anyone at anytime. The needs for the new range facilities were because: (1) the old range was a very limited facility (2) it had deteriorated, especially trash (3) the uncontrolled nature of the old facility led to many problems in maintaining the facility, both aesthetically and from a safety standpoint.

Issue 3- Page 7 Table 2 Potential impacts on human environment: #4 Land for the shooting complex is adjacent to the city and 1.5 miles from the city center. It is directly across the road from established residencies. The description provided says agricultural area of bench land. This land is imbedded in a suburban area.

This EA does not pertain to the location of the already existing range, but to the improvements proposed for that range. The historic use of the range area has been for cattle grazing and that use is proposed to continue as part of agricultural lease agreements with CMSC, Inc.

Issue4- Page 7&8, # 5 Human health: With regards to the comment on noise levels. The CMSC test was undefined. There was no standardized test procedure, no unbiased witness to the test, and noise evaluation was only at one location. #9 Distribution and density of population and housing Land adjacent to the shooting complex is being sold. Neighbors are very concerned about diminished domestic property values.

This EA does not pertain specifically to the location of the already existing range, but to the improvements proposed for that range. The nature of the proposed actions within this EA, do not necessarily generate any additional noise themselves. In fact the cover on the big bore shooting range will assist in reducing noise from that range. The preliminary noise tests conducted, although not standardized, were part of the initial public process conducted by CMSC for locating the new range complex and to demonstrate to the neighbors the noise that would be generated and to answer their concerns about those levels. It was included in the EA as informational to demonstrate that CMSC had considered noise and had attempted to answer the noise questions to the concerned neighbors. Whether important property values are diminished or not diminished does not seem to pertain to the proposed actions being evaluated.

Issue 5-Does the proposed action involve potential risk or adverse effects that are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? No

We disagree with that evaluation for the following reason. There will be increased traffic on the road, which when wet is dangerous, the dust is significant when dry and surface conditions are poor, which is most of the time. There are the objective dangers associated with shooting activities. On some boundaries of this land the public has free access, thereby exposing themselves to the objective dangers associated with shooting. Does the proposed action have impacts....

There are no significant impacts. There will be some increased road traffic by users of the range and the improvements proposed by this EA will undoubtedly attract some additional shooters. However, how much that road traffic is increased or whether the hazards are increased by the proposed actions specified for this EA is deemed to be insignificant. It has not been demonstrated that these increased hazards would be significant.

The boundaries where the public has free access are on the same State Lands as around the old range. Part of this proposed action is to install fencing. Shooting areas will be fenced to prevent livestock and the public straying into the range areas. The range will be signed as part of this project. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance procedures meet the National Rifle Association standards for safety of the range participants and the public at large. The inherent operations of a shooting range always pose some risks. However, those risks have been minimized by both the layout and range design, and by the operational procedures adopted by the CMSC. They have therefore taken all reasonable actions to minimize those risks and it was deemed that there are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Issue 6- Will code 70-17-101,MCA be met? Who is responsible for overseeing the implementation?

[70-17-101 MCA. Servitudes attached to land. The following land burdens or servitudes upon land may be attached to other land as incidents or appurtenances and are then called easements: (20) the right of using land adjacent to a firearms shooting range as a range safety zone.]

Again this has to do with the siting of the range complex itself, and is not part of the proposals for this EA. This range was already sited, land purchased and range complexes constructed or under construction. Adjacent

landowners within the “safety zone” of the range complex have all been contacted and are aware of the range and its operations. This is not directly related to the proposed actions of the EA, but to the previous siting of the range.

Issue 7 - Individuals or groups contributing to or commenting on this EA: No other comments were possible because this EA was not offered to the public for comment. We learned about this EA because of an article in the Lewistown News Argus, 8/24/05, "FWP awards \$75,000 to local shooting complex "Description & Analysis.... That "no other alternatives were deemed reasonably available..." This is a biased statement made for the convenience of the CMSC organizers. The CMSC, adjacent to the city of Lewistown and embedded in a suburban area, will have potentially significant impact on the development of the area. The increased recreational opportunities for firearms, safety and law enforcement could be satisfied by a site not adjacent to the city and proximity to homes.

In Accordance With [12.2.433](#) PUBLIC REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS:Methods of accomplishing public review include publishing a news release or legal notice to announce the availability of an EA...

The ARM rule(s) further state that, *The agency is responsible for providing additional opportunities for public review consistent with the seriousness and complexity of the environmental issues associated with a proposed action and the level of public interest.*

FWP readvertised the EA in the legal section of the local newspaper and provided an additional 30 days for people to provide comments.

Issue 8- Page 1 Type of Proposed Action: Improvements to shooting complex this needs to be fully described. Cooperating Agencies says that Fergus County Extension Office (4-H program), Fergus County commissioners and Fergus County Sheriff's Office, etc are participating on the board of directors. This may be true but it would appear much more valid if names were attached. Please provide names and respective affiliations.

Not all of these individuals participate or participated on the board of directors, but all have demonstrated support. Copies of any letters of support were included with the development fund requests submitted by CMSC. The statement: *are participating on the board of directors* will be removed in the amended version of this EA. The EA was for routine actions on an area with minimal environmental sensitivity and limited environmental impact. Therefore the abbreviated checklist format was used for this environmental evaluation. The intent of this paragraph is to list agencies that support or will utilize the facility and normally we would not list individual names. The information on these supporting agencies is used more to evaluate or prioritize the granting of funds for requesting organizations than to be a significant part of the environmental evaluation. Letters of support were received from Fergus County 4-H, Jennifer Saunders and the Chair of the County Commissioners, Carl Seilstad among others. Sheriff's Office and other agencies are all interested in utilizing the range for their training and qualifications programs.

Issue 9- Could you explain to me what the Resolution Date means?

The resolution is the legal document required by FWP from the shooting club/organization as part of their request for shooting range development funds. Each application must include a Project Resolution signed by the president or similar governing entity that indicates the application is an approved action by the organization's governing board. All Project Resolutions must be notarized. Parts of that resolution certify that the project application is consistent and compatible with submitted construction plans and programs for safe shooting range developments. The applicant further agrees to comply with all applicable procedures, federal and state guidelines and requirements throughout the application process and for 10 years after the construction of the project. A further part of that application procedure is a requirement for the applicant to show current insurance coverage for their operations, submit a copy of their lease agreement or title to the property involved, and to submit copies of any local, state or federal permits required for their proposed actions.

Issue 10-Figure 3 Map is not totally accurate.

Reviewed the map prior to it being re-advertised.

Issue 11- Page 4 Description of Proposed 2005 project- (a) what type of fence: barbed, electric, woven wire, etc (e) reseeding with what kind of plants? The fence will be a standard western type livestock fence probably a 3 or 4 strand barbed wire fence. The type of fence will be dependent on the requirements from the agricultural lessee, which is to preclude cattle from the firing lines. This fence will also demark the safety zones for individuals who may inadvertently wander into the shooting safety zones.

Issue 12-Proposed 2006-2007 projects (a) same as e above (d) will this be done for noise mitigation before the range is open? If this proposal is funded the projects must be completed by June 30, 2007. However, whether the range or portions of the range open before these improvements are completed is unclear. Opening of any portion of the range is a decision of the CMSC, as none of the proposed actions at this time seem critical to the safe short-term operation of the range.

Issue 13- Page 5 Environmental Review Table 1 says there will be no potential impacts. While the impacts may not be potentially significant there are certainly minor impacts from a disturbance of this size. Please re-consider and justify the entire x's in this entire table, particularly the following: This EA does not pertain specifically to the location of this range, nor the development that has already been done, but it pertains to the improvements proposed for that range. On the tables used in the checklist, any analysis or comment must be provided for only potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation. However, what are often included in these comments are points of clarification of what is going on with the proposed alternative, what the needs are, how those needs are being met, or how the resources are being managed or impacted. The area of the proposal is slightly more than 14 acres on the 160acre property, and the disturbances being considered in this EA pertain to the proposed actions listed in 2B above on those 14 acres. Although the impact of the larger area surrounding the proposed site is certainly considered. Neither this area nor the surrounding area is judged to be an environmentally sensitive area. The area also contains no threatened or endangered species, and the actions being considered have no significant environmental impact. Consequently, there is no degree of uncertainty that the proposed action(s) will have any significant impact upon any of the surrounding area.

Issue 14- 2. Terrestrial life of habitat will be impacted by traffic, noise, etc. There may certainly be some minor impact in very limited ways to a very limited number of species. Improvements being made under these proposals may also increase the number of people wanting to use the facility, thus increasing the traffic slightly. However, it is reasoned that the amount of traffic and the noise generated would be insignificant to terrestrial life in the area. Experience on other ranges indicates that there are few if any impacts to many terrestrial species from traffic and noise. Most visible species seem to thrive on existing ranges and many species adapt quite readily to the noise and activity on shooting ranges and such "noisy" places as airports. This is a very localized activity at the CMSC and there is no experiential evidence or other indication that there will be any long term or even major impacts to terrestrial life. Again, the scope of this EA pertains to the actions proposed in 2B above. The impacts that you have mentioned and your overall concerns seem to be with having this range sited in this location, which has already been done and not the focus for this EA.

Issue 15- 3. Introduction of new species is possible with numerous vehicles and individual entering the site. This is always a possibility that any vehicles traveling the road and entering the range area could carry noxious weed seeds. Weed control at the site will be the primary responsibility of CMSC, Inc. and spread of weeds along the right of way will continue to be handled by the county. The extent of this impact on the local area, CMSC, and the county is difficult to determine and considered to be very minimal, especially with the weed control measures in place.

Issue 16- 4. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality is certainly impacted currently with the barren area. This EA does not pertain to the already existing range, but it pertains to the improvements proposed for that range. No part of these proposed alternatives create any new "barren" areas. However, part of the proposed improvements are to eliminate noxious plants through sterile spraying of the inside of the small bore berms, with a certified herbicide, and then re-vegetating all the barren or disturbed areas with native or pasture grasses. Only certified herbicides and approved plants that are legally registered and recommended for such use will be utilized, where they will be

procured and the kind of herbicide and grass selected will be conducted legally. Due to the delays in the process of receiving any grant monies, the fall 2005 reseeded will not be done, due to a lack of funds. Re-seeding will be pursued in the spring and dependent on availability of funds. Funds availability will also influence the types of plant seed selected, but the goal is to have some type of ground cover to prevent erosion. Additionally parking areas and shooting areas will also be graveled.

Issue 17- 5. Water quality, quantity and distribution is being impacted with each precipitation event at this time. This EA does not pertain to the already existing range, but it pertains to the improvements proposed for that range. We are not quite sure how you think that the water quality, quantity and distribution is being impacted significantly with the proposed actions or even the overall range complex. This area of the proposed activity is ~14 acres on the 160 acres owned by CMSC. The area receives, on the average, only 12. 8" of rainfall annually. The quantity of annual rainfall, the lack of wetlands or flowing water, the soil type in the area, and the limited area effected by the proposed actions of this EA, would all indicate that any impacts would be negligible. However, re-vegetation of the barren areas should hold moisture and prevent erosion. Part of the improvements to the range also include adding water tanks for the cattle on the agriculture leases of the area, and the addition of port-a-potties which will be under contract to be cleaned and the waste transported to an authorized disposal facility.

Issue 18- 8. Air quality will be impacted when the shooting starts! This is a valid concern and shooting does discharge elements into the atmosphere. According to the NRA and the EPA, air quality on ranges is usually only an issue on indoor ranges or sometimes in areas where emission standards are not within attainment. The rate and level of the discharges on the types of ranges at CMSC are well within the established air quality guidelines, even for those individuals on the firing lines, and is not significant. However, this concern/ question is again in reference to the overall shooting complex activities and its operations and is not directly related to proposed actions of this EA.

Issue 19- 11. Aesthetics have certainly been impacted. Aesthetics are always difficult to measure and become subjective in nature. However, it has not been demonstrated that the actions proposed will have any significant impact on the aesthetics, other than to improve the "look" of the range, i.e. well graded road and parking area, fencing, cattle guard(s), covering the big bore shooting line, concrete tables, a variety of targets (vs. card board boxes, soda bottles and other impromptu targets that litter uncontrolled ranges) and the re-vegetating of the disturbed area. Shooting Clubs and organizations have a record of maintaining their ranges, much more so than the uncontrolled, either improvised shooting areas or unregulated public shooting areas.

Issue 20- Regarding the comment below the table: I have met with the Lewistown City Manager and he would give me no assurance that the old site is going to be closed. This decision is up to the City Council of Lewistown and has no place being discussed in this document. The concept for the new range was specifically to address the inadequacies of the old range and the needs for a new range. Whether the city decides to shut the old range down after the new complex is operational is the city's decision. Again the needs for this new range complex and the improvements to that range are due to the inadequacies of the old range facilities and the needs for the proposed action are part of an EA. The needs for the new range facilities were determined to be: (1) the old range was a very limited facility (2) it had deteriorated, especially trash [There are of course no guarantees that the new facility will not degenerate into an eyesore]. (3) the uncontrolled nature of the old facility led to many problems in maintaining the facility, both aesthetically and from a safety standpoint. (4) the old range did not offer a variety of shooting activities (5) the old range did not meet the requirements for registered or sanctioned shoots (6) the old range did not provide any sheltered shooting for inclement weather or sun protection (7) the old range was not handicapped accessible. These improvements in the proposed actions are part of the objectives to meet those needs. The new facility will be operated by the Central Montana Shooting Complex, Inc. (CMSC). The operation of shooting ranges and complexes by local clubs and organizations usually results in a better maintained facility than those that are public property or that are open to anyone at anytime or those improvised areas that have developed overtime as a place "where everyone goes to shoot". Additionally, these facilities definitely have a better safety record due to the controlled nature of the environment and facility.

Issue 21- table 2 also says there will be no potential impacts. While the impacts may not be potentially significant there are certainly minor impacts from a disturbance of this size. Please re-consider and justify all the x's in this entire table, particularly the following: The "disturbance of this size" seems to indicate the overall range complex

and alludes to the siting of this activity and not the proposed actions of this EA. However, all the tables have been re-evaluated.

Issue 22- human health will be impacted by the loss of quietness and the volume of people and traffic in the neighborhood. These concerns do not seem to be directly related to the proposed actions of this EA, but again relate to the siting of the overall range complex and its shooting operations. We do however agree that there will be a loss of quietness when the range is operating. We use the NRA and EPA standards and evaluation of sounds on shooting ranges as our guide. The Wyle Laboratory definition of noise used by the EPA is: “*Whenever unwanted sounds intrude into our environment, noise exists.*” That given, any observer may or may not consider “sound” generated by a given source to be “noise”. That you consider it noise is a valid concern. That certain types of noise can affect human health and safety is well documented. These adverse effects depend on their loudness and frequency spectrum. On the firing line itself this sound often exceeds the threshold for safe sounds. Consequently, folks on the firing line wear ear protection. As you move away from the sound that threshold drops and if there are any obstructions, such as berms, buildings, baffles, trees, etc. that sound is further diminished. Generally, although it may be irritating to some, it has been found that sounds generated on ranges will have little, if any, effect on the actual hearing or physical health of inhabitants of the surrounding area. Continuous shooting, such as during league or tournament shoots does become more of a nuisance. The NRA standard on ranges suggests having some noise abatement or operational plans that take into consideration any neighbors within ¼ mile of the facility. No shooting at night or after 10 pm and before 7 am are standards at many ranges and is suggested by the NRA. Noise does travel differently at night than during the day, in addition to being more annoying to many at night. The NRA standards based on field and textbook work finds it Unacceptable if the sound level exceeds 90 dB(A) for 1 hour out of 24 or exceeds 85 dB (A) for 8 hours out of 24 and the receiver is less than ¼ mile from the sound source. Again, sound barriers, baffles, or other sound reflection or refraction structures, such as physical barriers whether berms, trees, landscaping, natural hills or barriers or man made structures all will cut the “noise” significantly. However, none of the proposed actions discussed in this EA generate any of that noise, and some of the actions, such as the cover on the large bore range, will actually baffle or decrease the range of that noise.

Issue 23- ...the noise test with the neighbors is highly overstated and significantly flawed. Please don't use the neighbors as pawns in this analysis. There is no comparison to a few shots being fired by one individual to several hundred participants firing away in an organized shoot. Please delete any reference to the neighbors. This has caused significant turmoil already in our peaceful neighborhood (i.e., it has already affected human health!). The rudimentary noise test or demonstration was conducted as part of the scoping process during the initial range development. These “noises” do not have any significant impact on the proposed actions of this alternative and were added merely to indicate what measures had been attempted by CMSC to answer noise questions and concerns of the some of the public to the sounds generated by range operations. You are correct in that cumulatively and collectively the sounds of repeated firing would enter the realm of “noise” for some people, more so than just the firing of a single or a few shots. Although the “volume” is not increased the duration is certainly increased. The test although simple, was intended to demonstrate to those neighbors who participated, that the level of noise reaching their property was not as much as they had anticipated. It is unfortunate that some of the other neighbors were not included in this simple test when site or location scoping was taking place. However, none of the proposed actions discussed in this EA generate any of that noise, and some of the actions, such as the cover on the large bore range, will actually baffle or decrease the range of that noise.

Issue 24- demands for government services will be impacted – there has already been a request of the local government to address the poor quality of Limekiln Road. There will be a minimal increase in demands for government services, such as maintaining the road and roadside weed control due to the overall nature of the range complex, but they are not deemed significant. Those demands, however, are not impacted or increased by the actions proposed in this EA, but are impacted more by the siting and location of the range complex.

Issue 25- Page 8. Again I believe there are impacts and I request that they be acknowledged and discussed. None is defined as ‘not any’ or ‘in no degree’. There are certainly some impacts to a project of this magnitude. A ‘project of this magnitude’ seems to again refer to the overall range complex, which is not the objective of this EA. This EA evaluates the proposed actions or the proposed alternative. If these proposed actions were denied and the no action alternative were selected by the decision maker the subject of your concerns would not change.

Issue 26- Page 9 I respectively request that you delete the reference to the neighbors. Some were invited to the range tour but others were not. It is unfortunate that the CMSC did not insure that all neighbors were invited or available for their preliminary noise test. However, that rudimentary test or demonstration was conducted as part of the scoping process during the initial range development and sitting process. It does not have any impact on the proposed actions of this alternative and was added merely to indicate what measures had been attempted by CMSC to answer questions and concerns of the public to the noise generated by range operations.

Issue 27- Would you also include the date that the public tour was held? Test was conducted in April of 2005. Initial sound test/tour was setup prior to the request for these improvement funds and this EA.

Issue 28- 3. We wish to question several of the findings noted in both Tables 1 and 2. Disturbing 14.2 acres, building enormous bunkers, developing roads and sterile spraying ground does impact “aesthetics” and “vegetation.” Aesthetics are always difficult to measure and become subjective in nature. It would seem that the concerns are more related to the overall range itself and the development that has already gone on and not specifically to the proposed actions evaluated for this particular EA. “Bunkers” or ranges and roads are already built prior to and not part of this evaluation. Additionally, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed actions will have any significant impact on the aesthetics, other than to improve the “look” of the range, i.e. well graded road and parking area, fencing, cattle guard(s), covering the big bore shooting line, concrete tables, a variety of targets (vs. card board boxes, soda bottles and other impromptu targets that litter uncontrolled ranges) and the re-vegetating of the disturbed area. Shooting Clubs and organizations have a record of maintaining their ranges, much more so than the uncontrolled, either improvised shooting areas or unregulated public shooting areas. Sterile spraying is intended to eliminate noxious weeds and prepare the area for reseeded with prairie of pasture grasses that will not only improve the look of the range, but also more importantly prevent soil erosion.

Issue 29- in answer to the question, “Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?” the assessment concluded, “This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant.” It is also stated that, there were “no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues” found. These statements are unequivocally false. We live across the road from this range. Members of the club shot approximately 8 rounds in three different locations and concluded that the noise was not an issue. They did not have 100 shooters spend 3 days shooting continually over an 8 to 10 hour period. There is a significant difference between one person firing a few rounds (individually minor) and a major shooting competition (cumulatively significant). This is “controversial” but there is such a ground swell of enthusiasm for shooting that the individuals who disagree have been totally ignored. These concerns, although valid, do not seem to be directly related to the proposed actions of this EA, but again relate to the siting of the overall range complex and its shooting activities. The rudimentary noise test or demonstration conducted by the range in the past was conducted as part of the scoping process during the initial range development and siting process. It does not have any impact on the proposed actions of this alternative and was added merely to indicate what measures had been attempted by CMSC to answer questions and concerns of the public to the noise generated by range activities. We do however agree that there will be a loss of quietness when the range is operating. That certain types of noise can affect human health and safety is well documented (National Rifle Association Range Sourcebook and EPA). These adverse effects depend on their loudness and frequency spectrum. On the firing line itself this sound often exceeds the threshold for safe sounds. Consequently, folks on the firing line wear ear protection. As you move away from the sound that threshold drops and if there are any obstructions, such as berms, buildings, baffles, trees, etc. that sound is further diminished. Generally, although it may be irritating to some, it has been found that sounds generated on ranges will have little, if any, effect on the physical health of inhabitants of the surrounding area. The threshold of sounds to be most concerned about are usually limited to the firing line (see additional comments in Issue 22 response). The nature of the proposed actions within this EA, do not necessarily generate any additional noise themselves. In fact the cover on the big bore shooting range should help deaden the noise from that range.

Issue 30- we also want to question the conclusion offered in Table 2 that states that there are no impacts to “social structures.” We would call a home of 22 years a “social structure.” The fact that there are only a few neighbors does not mean that there is no social impact. Your comments and concerns are valid for those close neighbors and for the overall range complex activities. However, this EA evaluates the proposed actions or the

proposed alternative. If these proposed actions were denied and the no action alternative, were selected by the decision-maker, the subject of your concerns would not change. There would still be a shooting range and shooting activities would continue.

Issue 31- ...No erosion plan. No Live bullet distance findings regarding my own and family's safety, or my leaser's animals. (This is live ammunition not toy bullets. Not one test. Amazing.) No different ambient air study on sound. No sound impact on general community. No aesthetic impact. No plan in place to soften its visual and ugly profile. No study of value of land impact to neighboring land. No study on proposed RV Park. No study on environmental impact in general.

These statements have been addressed in the above comments. The majority of these statements have been addressed in the responses above; however, in regards to safety of the range, CMSC consulted with the National Rifle Association in 2003. A NRA Range Technical Team Advisor conducted a site inspection and made recommendations on siting of the range (a copy of this report is on file).

This EA evaluates the proposed actions or the proposed alternative. If these proposed actions were denied and the no action alternative, was selected by the decision-maker, the subject of your concerns would not change. There would still be a shooting range and shooting activities would continue.

IV. Modifications to the Environmental Assessment

Based on the public comments received, modifications to the Draft EA are deemed to be unnecessary.

V. Decision

After review of the proposal and the corresponding comments, it is my decision to proceed with providing funding through the Shooting Range Development Grant program for range improvements for the Central Montana Shooting Complex.

I find there to be no significant impacts associated with this action and conclude that an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. The completed EA and the response to comments included in this Decision Notice are an appropriate level of analysis.

Thomas Baumeister
Education Bureau Chief
Communications & Education Division